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ADDITIONAL NOTES ON THE  
DIVINE COMEDY.

By HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW.

THE following notes were made from time to time by Mr. LONGFELLOW, during the later years of his life, after the publication of his translation of the Divine Comedy in 1867. He proposed to revise at some time the whole book, both text and comment, and these notes were to be inserted in their respective places. He was fond, as his Comment shows, of recording similarities of thought and expression between Dante and other poets; and the notes now printed are of interest in the illustration they afford of the range of his reading, and of the dwelling of his thought, year after year, upon the "poema sacro."

C. E. N.

MAY, 1885.

# INFERNO.

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## CANTO III.

- 37-41. "Commingled are they with that caitiff choir  
Of Angels, who have not rebellious been,  
Nor faithful were to God, but were for self.  
The heavens expelled them, not to be less fair ;  
Nor them the nethermore abyss receives."

DRYDEN, *The Hind and the Panther*, Part i. 341, says :—

"If as our dreaming Platonists report,  
There could be spirits of a middle sort,  
Too black for heav'n, and yet too white for hell,  
Who just dropped half way down nor lower fell."

## CANTO V.

- 31-33. "The infernal hurricane that never rests,  
Hurtles the spirits onward in its rapine ;  
Whirling them round, and smiting, it molests them."

*Isaiah* xvii. 13 ; "And they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind."

## CANTO VI.

69. "By force of him who now is on the coast."

*Che testè piaggia*. Perhaps *piaggia* here means hovering over ; in falconry, *coasting*.

SHAKESPEARE, *King Henry VI*. Part III. Act I. Sc. 1.

"Whose haughty spirit, winged with desire,  
Will coast my crown, and like an empty eagle  
Tire on the flesh of me and of my son."

Also in the *Roman de la Rose*, verse 1423.

“ Mais le Dieu d'Amours m'a suivy,  
Et de loing m'estoit costoiant,  
Me regardant et espiant  
Comme le veneur fait la beste.”

#### CANTO IX.

41. “ Small serpents and cerastes were their tresses.”

Nicander in his *Theriaca* describes the Cerastes, and a translation of the passage is in Elton's *Classic Poets*, i. 399.

#### CANTO XI.

99. “ Nature takes her course  
From Intellect Divine, and from its art.”

YOUNG, *Night Thoughts*, ix. 1269.

“ The course of Nature is the Art of God.”

#### CANTO XII.

9. Ch' alcuna via darebbe a chi su fosse.  
“ Some path 't would give to him who was above.”

In this passage I was at first inclined to give *alcuna* its usual meaning of “ some ; ” but after seeing the spot alluded to, and the inaccessible precipice left by the land-slide, I am confident it should be rendered in a negative sense, as before in Canto III. 42.

[But verse 28 seems to indicate that the original rendering is correct. — N.]

#### CANTO XV.

63. “ But that ungrateful and malignant people,  
Which of old time from Fesole descended,  
And smacks still of the mountain and the granite.”

*Macigno*, which I have rendered "granite," is, — according to Ferber, *Travels through Italy in 1771-72*; Raspe's translation, London, 1776, p. 91, — "A micaceous stone, consisting of clay and some lime; appearing rather to be entirely composed of glimmer. In the uppermost strata it is shivery, but very compact and hard in a greater depth. Hence Petrarch's and other poets' *petti di macigno* of their unyielding cruel fair ones."

And further on, p. 269, "There remains at Fiesole a piece of an old Etruscan wall, consisting in large square-cut stones of *macigno*, which are put together without cement. The present quarries of *macigno* near Fiesole are situated on the hill called *Ceceri*, and in another over against to the southwest called *Settignano*. All the other hills hereabout consist likewise of *macigno*, bordering on calcareous hills, such as *Monte Morello* and others. I have noticed already in one of my former Letters that *macigno* is a species of slate, composed of an argillaceous earth, much mica, and some lime."

["*Macigno*," says Gherardini in *Supplimento a Vocabulari Italiani*, "being derived from the word *macine*, mill-stone, is used properly only of those stones of which mill-stones are made."

It was at Settignano that Michelangelo was put out to nurse, "a place all full," says Vasari, "of quarries of *macigno*." — N.]

## CANTO XVII.

127-131. "As falcon . . .

Descendeth weary, whence he started swiftly  
Through a hundred circles."

BELAMY, *Treatise upon Falconry*, p. 125. "Every hawk of the soar mounts by a circling course."

SHERIDAN KNOWLES, *Love*, Act I. Sc. 2.

"'Tis not by them he makes  
His ample wheels; mounts up, and up, and up  
In spiry rings, piercing the firmament,  
Till he o'ertops his prey, then gives his stoop,  
More fleet and sure than ever arrow sped."

## CANTO XVIII.

51. Ma che ti mena a sì pungenti salse ?  
 "But what doth bring thee to such pungent sauces?"

There is also a region in the Apennines between Modena and Lucca called the Salsa. Ferber in his *Travels in Italy*, Raspe's translation, p. 287, thus describes it: "The *Salsa di Modena* is a remarkable swamp in the hills near Sassuolo, where the new road is making over the Apennines to Massa di Carrara. It seems to be the exterior or upper covering of a volcano, which is said to sometimes throw out earth, pyrites, and large stones. A pole may be driven or forced into it to the depth of a fathom; being taken out, the water springs with violence from the hole which it had produced."

## CANTO XX.

29. "Who is a greater reprobate than he  
 Who feels compassion at the doom divine?"

In the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyám are these lines: —

"O Thou who burn'st in Heart for those who burn  
 In Hell, whose fires thyself shall feed in turn,  
 How long be crying, 'Mercy on them, God!'  
 Why, who art Thou to teach, and He to learn?"

126. "Cain and the thorns."

CHAUCER, *Testament of Creseide*, verses 260-263, says of Lady Sinthia:—

"Her gite was gray and ful of spottes blake,  
 And on her brest a chorle painted ful even,  
 Bearing a bush of thornes on his bake,  
 Which for his theft might clime no ner the Heven."

And SHAKESPEARE in *The Tempest* ii. 2:—

"*Stephano*. I was the man in the moon when time was."

"*Caliban*. I have seen thee in her, and I do adore thee: my mistress showed me thee, and thy dog, and thy bush."

In an old German popular tale given in Thorpe's *Yule-Tide Stories*, the legend is thus told : —

"Very, very long ago there was a man who went into the forest one Sunday to cut wood. Having chopped a large quantity of brushwood, he tied it together, thrust a stick through the bundle, threw it over his shoulder, and was on his way home, when there met him on the road a comely man, dressed in his Sunday clothes, who was going to church. He stopped, and, accosting the wood-cutter, said : 'Dost thou not know that on earth this is Sunday, the day on which God rested from his works, after he had created the world, with all the beasts of the field, and also man? Dost thou not know what is written in the fourth commandment, "Thou shalt keep holy the Sabbath day?"' The questioner was our Lord himself. The wood-cutter was hardened, and answered : 'Whether it is Sunday on earth or Monday (Moonday) in heaven, what does it concern thee or me?'

"'For this thou shalt ever bear thy bundle of wood,' said the Lord ; 'and because the Sunday on earth is profaned by thee, thou shalt have an everlasting Monday, and stand in the moon, — a warning to all such as break the Sunday by work.'

"From that time the man stands in the moon, with his fagot of brushwood, and will stand there to all eternity."

#### CANTO XXIV.

106. "Even thus by the great sages 't is confessed  
The phœnix dies, and then is born again,  
When it approaches its five-hundredth year."

SAINT CLEMENT OF ROME, *Epist. ad Corinth.* § 25, as translated by Harwood, says of the phœnix : —

"Let us contemplate that wonderful phænomenon in the eastern countries, namely, about Arabia. There is a certain bird called a Phœnix. There is never but one of the species, and it lives five hundred years. When the time of its dissolution approaches, it forms a nest of frankincense, myrrh, and other aromatics. Into this, when its time is compleated, it enters and dies. Its flesh, putrifying, generates a worm, which feeds on the carcass of its deceased parent until it puts forth wings — becoming then robust and vigorous, it takes the nest, where the bones of its predecessor lie, and carries it through the air from Arabia to Egypt, into a city called Heliopolis ; and there, in open day, in the sight of all the inhabitants, it lays them upon the altar of the sun, and then returns. When the priests examine the records, they find that this phænomenon hath made its appearance precisely at the consummation of a period of five hundred years."

STEHELIN, *Traditions of the Jews*, London, 1742, i. 219, gives the following legend of the phoenix : —

“The generation of the Bird Phoenix was preserved from him [the Angel of Death], because when Eve had eaten of the Fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and given thereof to the Man, she envied the Rest of the Creatures and gave thereof to every one to eat : And seeing the Bird Phoenix, she said to him, Eat of This, whereof all other Birds have eaten. But he (the Phoenix) said to her, It sufficeth not, that you have sinned against the holy and blessed God, and betray'd others to a Necessity of Dying ; You must likewise come to tempt me. Wouldst thou, Eve, also beguile and delude me to break the Commandment of the holy and blessed God, and to eat and die ? But I will not hearken to Thee. Then he rebuked Eve and all the Creatures. And presently a Voice was heard from Heaven, which said to Adam and Eve, You have not kept my Commandment, but have sinned. You have been with the bird Phoenix, to draw him to Sin likewise ; but he consented not, but feared me, and regarded my Commandment, tho' I had not given it him. Wherefore I have decreed, that neither he nor his Seed shall taste of Death.”

SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS, *Weeks and Days*. Week I, Day 5.

“Perchéd, therefore, upon a branch of palm,  
With incense, cassia, spikenard, myrrh, and balm,  
By break of day she builds, in narrow room,  
Her urn, her nest, her cradle, and her tomb.”

125. Vanni Fucci.

[In the note upon this verse, a sonnet by Vanni Fucci, cited by Crescimbeni, *Istoria della Volg. Poesia*, II. ii. 99, is spoken of as “pathetic from its utter despair and self-reproach. It is like the wail of a lost soul, and the same in tone as the words which Dante puts into his mouth.” The following is a translation of this sonnet.]

SONNET BY VANNI FUCCI.

Shine not for me henceforth or Moon or Sun,  
Nor let the Earth bring forth its fruits for me,  
Let air, and fire, and water hostile be  
Forever more, and me let fortune shun !  
Let every star and planet, one by one,  
Blast me, and brutify each sense ! for see,  
Ruined I cannot be more utterly,  
Nor suffer greater pain than I have done !

Now will I live even as a savage wight,  
 Barefoot and naked, dwelling in desert place,  
 And he who will may do me wrong and spite ;  
 I cannot suffer any worse disgrace.  
 April or May can bring me no delight,  
 Nor anything my sense of shame efface ;  
 Since I have lost the good I might have still,  
 Through little wit, and not of my own will.

CANTO XXVIII.

115. "If it were not that conscience reassures me,  
 That good companion which emboldens man  
 Beneath the hauberk of its feeling pure."

SHAKESPEARE, *Second Part of King Henry VI.* Act III. Sc. 2.

"What stronger breastplate than a heart untainted?"

SIR HENRY WOTTON, *The Character of a Happy Life.*

"How happy is he, born or taught,  
 Who serveth not another's will ;  
 Whose armour is his honest thought,  
 And simple truth his utmost skill."

HORACE, *Epist.* Lib i. I. 60.

"Hic murus aheneus esto :  
 Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa."

CANTO XXXI.

59. "As is at Rome the pine-cone of Saint Peter's."

JOHN EVELYN in his *Diary*, Rome, Jan. 18, 1645, describing the Vatican Gardens, says : "We were likewise showed the relics of the Hadrian Moles ; viz., the Pine, a vast piece of metal which stood on the summit of that mausoleum."

## CANTO XXXIII.

151.     “ Ah, Genoese ! ye men at variance  
          With every virtue, full of every vice ! ”

There is also a Spanish proverb that says : —

“ Al Andaluz  
  Hazle la cruz ;  
  Y al Genoes  
  Hazle tres.”

155.             “ one such, who for his deeds  
          In soul already in Cocytus bathes,  
          And still above in body seems alive.”

CHAUCER, *The Man of Lawes Tale*.

“ Fy feendly spirit, for I dar wel telle,  
  Though thou here walke, thy spirit is in helle.”

# PURGATORIO.



## CANTO II.

107. "Amoroso canto."

Compare MILTON's "amorous descant." *Par. Lost*, iv. 603.

## CANTO VII.

80. "Ma di soavità di mille odori  
Vi faceva un incognito indistinto."

"But of the sweetness of a thousand odors  
Made there a mingled fragrance and unknown."

DRYDEN, *Eleonora*, 144.

"'T is like the Milky Way, all over bright,  
But sown so thick with stars, 't is undistinguish'd light.

As in perfumes compos'd with art and cost,  
'T is hard to say what scent is uppermost;  
Nor this part musk or civet can we call,  
Or amber, but a rich result of all."

SHELLEY, *Epipsychidion*, 92.

"A warm shade  
Of unentangled intermixture, made  
By Love, of light and motion."

100. "His name was Ottocar."

CARLYLE'S account (*Frederick the Great*, i. 132) of Ottocar's paying homage to Rudolph is as follows : —

"Ottocar quitted Prag with a resplendent retinue, to come into the Danube country, and do homage to 'my domestic' that once was. He bargained that the sad ceremony should be at least private; on an Island in the Danube, between the two retinues or armies; and in a tent, so that only official select persons might see it. The Island is called *Camberg* (near Vienna, I conclude), in the middle of the Donau River: there Ottocar accordingly knelt; he in great pomp of tailorage, Rudolf in mere buff jerkin, practical leather and iron; — hide it, charitable canvas, from all but a few! Alas, precisely at this moment, the treacherous canvas rushes down, — hung so on purpose, thinks Ottocar; and it is a tent indeed, but a tent without walls; and all the world sees me in this scandalous plight."

113. "That one of the manly nose."

A pleasant story is told by Boccaccio of Charles d'Anjou and the daughters of Messer Neri degli Uberti, "Ginevra la bella" and "Gotta la bionda." See *Decamerone*, Giorn. X. Nov. 6.

#### CANTO IX.

5. "Set in the shape of that cold animal."

Of the scorpion OVID says : —

"Dum loquor, elatae metuendus acumine caudae  
Scorpions in virides praecipitatur aquas."

*Fastorum*, lib. iv. 163.

#### CANTO XI.

105. "Before thou left the *pappo* and the *dindi*."

GRAZZINI, *Novelle, Seconda Cena*, Nov. 2.

"He never could forget certain words which he had learned as a child, such as saying *babbo* and *mamma* for father and mother, calling bread *pappo*, and wine *bombo*, and money *dindi*."

CANTO XIII.

70. "For all their lids an iron wire transpierces  
And sews them up, as to a sparrowhawk wild  
Is done."

BELAMY, *Treatise on Falconry*, p. 34, says : —

"Before the invention of the hood, in order to blindfold the hawks, falconers had recourse to an operation termed *sealing*, or *seeling*, which was performed by passing a needle and thread through the upper and under eyelid, by means of which they were brought together and secured, — the bird being thus, as occasion served, deprived of its sight."

CANTO XVI.

124. "Currado da Palazzo and good Gherardo."

In the *Convito*, iv. 14, DANTE, speaking of nobility, says : —

"Let us suppose that Gherardo da Cammino had been the grandson of the most ignoble peasant that ever drank of the Sile or of the Cagnano; and that his grandsire was not yet forgotten; who will dare to say that Gherardo da Cammino was an ignoble man? and who will not say with me that he was noble? Certainly no one, however presumptuous he may be; for he was so, and so will his memory be forever."

CANTO XIX.

133. " 'Straighten thy legs, and upward raise thee, brother,'  
He answered: 'Err not, fellow-servant am I  
With thee.' "

PARNELL, *The Hermit*.

"For this commissioned I forsook the sky;  
Nay, cease to kneel! — thy fellow-servant I."

## ILLUSTRATIONS TO THE PURGATORIO.

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Vision of Drichthelm. A.D. 699. Roger de Wendover, *Flowers of History*, Bohn's edition. i. 120.

Purgatory of St. Patrick. A.D. 1153. Roger de Wendover, *Flowers of History*, Bohn's edition. i. 510.

Vision of the Monk of Evesham. A.D. 1196. Roger de Wendover, *Flowers of History*, Bohn's edition. ii. 148.

Vision of Turchill. A.D. 1206. Roger de Wendover, *Flowers of History*, Bohn's edition. ii. 221.

# PARADISO.

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## CANTO IX.

32. "Cunizza was I called."

See, also, GIAMBATTISTA VERCÌ, *Storia degli Ecelini*, Lib. v., cap. xiv. *Di Cunizza*.

## CANTO XII.

140. "The Calabrian Abbot Joachim."

See, also, MOSHEIM, *Ecclesiastical History*, Cent. XIII. Part II. ch. ii. sec. 33; and HIGGINS, *Anacalypsis*, i. 693. [But especially RENAN, *Nouvelles Études d'Histoire Religieuse*, Joachim de Flore et l'Évangile Éternel. — N.]

## CANTO XVII.

76. Can Grande.

For another anecdote of Can Grande see BOCCACCIO, *Decamerone*, Giorn. I. Nov. 7.

## CANTO XIX.

78. "Where is his fault if he do not believe?"

DRYDEN, *Religio Laici*.

"'Tis said the sound of a Messiah's birth  
Is gone through all the habitable earth;  
But still that text must be confin'd alone  
To what was then inhabited and known:  
And what provision could from thence accrue  
To Indian souls, and worlds discover'd new?  
In other parts it helps, that ages past,

The scriptures there were known, and were embrac'd,  
 Till sin spread once again the shades of night :  
 What 's that to these who never saw the light ?  
 Of all objections this indeed is chief,  
 To startle reason, stagger frail belief :  
 We grant, 'tis true, that Heaven from human sense  
 Has hid the secret paths of providence :  
 But boundless wisdom, boundless mercy, may  
 Find ev'n for those bewildered souls, a way :  
 If from his nature foes may pity claim,  
 Much more may strangers who ne'er heard his name.  
 And though no name be for salvation known,  
 But that of his eternal Son's alone ;  
 Who knows how far transcending goodness can  
 Extend the merits of that Son to man ?  
 Who knows what reasons may his mercy lead ;  
 Or ignorance invincible may plead ?  
 Not only charity bids hope the best,  
 But more the great apostle has exprest :  
 ' That if the Gentiles, whom no law inspir'd,  
 By nature did what was by law requir'd,  
 They, who the written rule had never known,  
 Were to themselves both rule and law alone :  
 To nature's plain indictment they shall plead,  
 And by their conscience be condemn'd or freed.'  
 Most righteous doom ! because a rule reveal'd  
 Is none to those from whom it was conceal'd.  
 Then those who follow'd reason's dictates right,  
 Liv'd up, and lifted high their natural light,  
 With Socrates may see their Maker's face,  
 While thousand rubric-martyrs want a place."

## CANTO XX.

73. "Like as a lark that in the air expatiates,  
 First singing and then silent with content."

BERNARD DE VENTADOUR, a troubadour of the twelfth century, says in one of his songs : —

"Quan vey laudeta mover  
 De joi sas alas contra'l rai,  
 Que s'oblida e s laissa cazer  
 Per la doussor qu'al cor li 'n vai."

CANTO XXV.

113. "Of him our Pelican."

In SYLVESTER'S DU BARTAS, *Fifth Day of the Week*, the pelican is referred to as —

"A type of Christ, who sin-thralled man to free  
Became a captive, and on shameful tree,  
Self-guiltless shed his blood."

CANTO XXVI.

139. "Upon the mount was I . . .  
From the first hour to that which is the second,  
As the sun changes quadrant to the sixth."

That Adam and Eve were only seven hours in Paradise was a common belief in the Middle Ages. The Welsh bard Taliesin sings : —

"Seven hours they were  
The orchard keeping  
Till Satan brought strife  
With wiles from hell.

"Thence were they driven,  
Cold and shivering,  
To gain their living,  
Into this world."

*Mabinogion*, Part vii. 385.